

Detour gets work started on 5 miles of Loop 303 in Peoria

by **Marjon Rostami** - Feb. 18, 2009
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The future of Peoria is under way with the construction of a five-mile portion of Loop 303 between Happy Valley Road and Lake Pleasant Parkway.

Cathy Carlat, councilwoman for the Mesquite District where construction will take place, said business opportunities from Loop 303 is the reason she ran for council. "It's our future," she said. "It's where all of our economic development is going to be geared. It's our next employment corridor."

The Arizona Department of Transportation is in the initial stage of construction, building a temporary detour just south of the current alignment.

"It's nothing that will pose any type of impact on traffic because this portion is essentially on undeveloped state land," said Brock Barnhart, an ADOT project manager. "The only impact that the traveling public would really see is this temporary detour."

Traffic flow will be switched after the detour's construction is completed in March, he said.

Carlat said her main concern was for the nearly 15,000 residents of Vistancia.

"Happy Valley is the only route in and out of their community," she said. "All I could think about was a very long line of people waiting to turn."

ADOT worked in partnership with Peoria to open a westbound lane going into the Vistancia community where residents would not have a stop sign. Carlat and other city officials agree that Peoria missed opportunities with the construction of Loop 101.

"I would say, with the construction of residential development right up against the freeway, we've come a long way and learned a lot," Carlat said. The city's goal is to attract large corporations to the Loop 303 corridor to build their headquarters in Peoria.

"These are going to be high-end, high-quality jobs," Carlat said. While the city has not yet made contact with businesses to potentially relocate, Carlat said the infrastructure will be in place for a developer to start once the freeway construction ends.

Residents can sign up to receive e-mail alerts about construction activities, including closures or restrictions, at www.azdot.gov/Highways/Valley_Freeways/Loop_303/North/mailling_list.asp. The ADOT project hotline is 480-890-3055.